

# HOW TO CALM A CRYING BABY

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- Check physical needs first: Is the baby hungry? Thirsty? Need to be burped? Too hot or too cold? Diaper dirty?
- Check for signs of illness or fever. If you think the baby may be sick, seek medical attention immediately.
- Rock the baby, hold the baby close, or walk with the baby.
- Stand up, holding the baby close, and repeatedly bend at your knees.
- Sing or talk to the baby in a soothing voice.
- Gently rub or stroke the baby's back, chest, or tummy.
- Offer a pacifier or try to distract the baby with a rattle or toy.
- Swaddle the baby with a soft blanket.
- Turn on some music or noise like a vacuum cleaner or clothes dryer.
- Take the baby for a ride in a stroller or in a car seat in the car.

Try each of the above for a few minutes before trying something else, or try a few together.

If nothing seems to work, it is OK to leave the baby in a safe place (like a crib) and take time to calm down. Leave the room. Shut the door. Take a few deep breaths. Call a friend or family member.

## NO MATTER WHAT, NEVER SHAKE A BABY.

Keep as a reference for everyone who cares for your baby.



The Children's Hospital

THE KEMPE FOUNDATION  
FOR THE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT  
OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT



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# How To Calm A Crying Baby

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Preventing Shaken Baby Syndrome



## ABIES CRY SO BE PREPARED!

Even though everyone knows that babies cry, caring for a fussy baby can be frustrating and leave anyone feeling helpless. Sometimes, a crying baby can be completely overwhelming. But no matter how bad it gets, no matter how tired or frustrated you feel, shaking the baby is never the answer.

## HY DO BABIES CRY?

Babies cry because they have to—there is no other way for a baby to “talk”. They cry because they need to tell you they are hungry or thirsty, uncomfortable, ill, frustrated, tired, scared, or lonely. Some babies cry before bed—or naptime—when they are very tired. Others may be teething, have gas, or colic. Sometimes the answer is as simple as food or a diaper change; other times the crying is a mystery that seems to go on forever and nothing works to stop it. Remember, it’s normal for all babies to cry sometimes.

## HAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU SHAKE A BABY?

Shaking a baby, even for a second, can cause serious injury or death. **Shaken Baby Syndrome** is a serious type of brain injury that happens when an infant or toddler is violently shaken—usually in response to crying that will not stop. Babies’ neck muscles aren’t strong and don’t provide much support for their heads. When someone forcefully shakes a baby, the baby’s brain repeatedly strikes the inside of the skull, injuring the brain. It is important to know that shaking a baby is a serious form of child abuse with serious consequences for the adult also.

**Shaking a baby can cause severe brain damage, blindness, hearing loss, learning problems, seizure disorders, cerebral palsy, paralysis, and even death.**

## EELING OVERWHELMED?

No one plans to shake a baby, but without a plan in place to help calm a baby, it can happen. If you are feeling frustrated, overwhelmed, or angry:

- *Set the baby down*—It is OK to leave a crying baby alone in a safe place (like a crib) for a short time. Close the door, and go in another room for a quick break.
- *Get control of your emotions*—Take several deep breaths, calm down (feel yourself relax), and wait a few minutes before you return to the baby.
- *Call a reliable adult to help*—A friend or relative can help calm you down, or even take care of the baby while you take a break.

- *When I need help, I will call:*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ # \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ # \_\_\_\_\_

- *Call your baby’s doctor.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ # \_\_\_\_\_

For more information:  
[www.dontshakeababy.com](http://www.dontshakeababy.com)

